



KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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2010 WAS A BUSY YEAR IN P-12 EDUCATION

(FRANKFORT, Ky.) – Kentucky Education Commissioner Terry Holliday takes a look back at the events of 2010 and notes that it was a busy, fruitful year for the state’s P-12 education community.

“When I tally up the events and accomplishments related to P-12 education, I see many positive events,” said Holliday. “Overall, 2010 will be remembered as a year of activity and purpose in public education. I believe that Kentuckians have a renewed sense of hope for the future of our P-12 education system, and I know that our teachers, principals, superintendents, parents, elected officials and citizens recognize their crucial importance to the state’s success.”

Here are some major highlights of public education in 2010.

- ✓ **Common Core State Standards adoption** – In March, the Kentucky Board of Education, Council on Postsecondary Education and the Education Professional Standards Board jointly adopted the Common Core State Standards for English/language arts and mathematics. In doing so, Kentucky became the first state in the nation to adopt those standards.

This was a bold step toward improving education outcomes for Kentucky’s students. The work began in 2009, when Gov. Steve Beshear signed the agreement that states develop common academic standards. Kentucky joined 50 states and territories, the National Governors Association, the Council of Chief State School Officers, Achieve, ACT, ETS and others in a major effort to place America back in the front of educational attainment in the world.

- ✓ **Passage of House Bill 176 (KRS 160.346)** – In its regular session, the 2010 General Assembly passed House Bill 176, which will have resonating effects for years to come throughout the state’s public school classrooms.

House Bill 176 provided much-needed interventions in the state’s lowest-performing schools. Through its mandates, Kentucky is able to offer school districts more options to help them improve – from selecting an education management organization to operate schools, to exercising more flexibility in staffing, to restructuring the existing management of those schools that are persistently low-performing.

Thanks to the actions of the legislature, and to the support of educators, board members and partners across the state, Kentucky will lead the nation in the next wave of educational improvement.

(more)

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- ✓ **Persistently low-achieving schools named and supported** – In the spring of 2010, Kentucky identified 10 schools as “persistently low-achieving” (PLA), based on state and federal criteria. The schools’ identifications were tied to their reading and mathematics test score results and adequate yearly progress (AYP) status.

By identifying these schools, we ensured that they would be eligible to receive federal School Improvement Grant (SIG) funding of up to \$1.5 million over a three-year period. This funding will be used to help the schools raise achievement levels, improve the performance of their students and achieve AYP.

The schools also received leadership assessments, which provided insight and suggestions for improvement, along with strong technical support.

- ✓ **New Kentucky Board of Education members** –Gov. Steve Beshear appointed five new members to the Kentucky Board of Education. The five – Martha Jones, Roger Marcum, Jay Parrent, Bill Twyman and Mary Gwen Wheeler – represent a broad range of experience and backgrounds, but they share the common goal of improving education for the state’s children.

In August, the board selected David Karem as its chair, then set four strategic priorities to guide its work: Next-Generation Learners; Next-Generation Professionals; Next-Generation Support Systems; and Next-Generation Schools and Districts. This board is focused on supporting schools and districts, raising achievement, ensuring that students are prepared for life after high school, closing gaps, accountability and transparency.

- ✓ **Leadership Networks** – Throughout 2010, KDE staff were engaged in the work of developing a system of Leadership Networks designed to support the high-quality implementation of the requirements set forth in 2009’s Senate Bill 1. The networks are intended to build the capacity of each school district as they implement Kentucky’s new Core Academic Standards, develop assessment literacy among all educators and work toward ensuring that every student is college- and career-ready.

Those Leadership Networks are now in place. Participants are collaborating with other leaders in their regions to hone practice and knowledge and working within their districts to scale up highly effective practices in every classroom.

- ✓ **Budget cuts** – As with other state agencies, the Kentucky Department of Education has experienced significant budget cuts over the past few fiscal years. This has impacted our agency’s ability to fill empty positions and required us to rethink our short- and long-term plans.

An agency-wide reorganization in the summer of 2010 was a direct response to these cuts and enabled us to focus on the Kentucky Board of Education’s strategic priorities, the implementation of 2009’s Senate Bill 1 and the provision of services to our state’s 174 school districts.

- ✓ **Race to the Top** – Kentucky was fortunate to be named as a finalist in both Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the federal Race to the Top competition. However, we were not awarded funds in either phase.

This was disappointing; but, the lack of Race to the Top funding did not deter us from moving forward with our plans. We’ve continued to focus on support for students and educators; providing high-quality learning opportunities; providing the training our educators need; connecting them with best practices; and setting a high bar for success. The fact that Kentucky was named a finalist twice indicates that our plans are strong and worthwhile. And, the unanimous support of our plan from the state’s superintendents and local boards of education was a heartening result of this process.

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